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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002121

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: PRT DIYALA: BOMBING TARGETS PARTY HQ IN BAQUBAH

Classified By: Classified By: PRT Diyala Team Leader George White for reasons

1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: On July 30, a bomb exploded inside the party headquarters of the National Movement for Reform and Development (NMRD) in Baqubah, killing seven and wounding approximately ten party members. NMRD did not win seats in Diyala during the 2009 Provincial Council (PC) elections, but did win 2.6 percent of the vote. The party suffered previous attacks in the run up to the PC elections and blames the current and previous attacks on rival political parties. Other sources claim, however, that infighting among current and former party members could provide a more likely motive for the bombing. End Summary.

Bombing in Baqubah Targets Political Party

12. (C) Reports vary, but approximately seven individuals were killed, and ten wounded in the attack. Among those killed were former party members Lt. Col Tariq and Salam al-Sumaydi. The party's current leader in Diyala, Satar Kitab Qaed al-Sultani, was wounded. Public reports indicate that the explosion occurred during a meeting of the group's members. Local sources report that members routinely gather to discuss party issues and that this was not a special meeting.

Background on the National Movement for Reform and Development

13. (C) The National Movement for Reform and Development, otherwise known as the "The Solution," formed in late 2007 in Anbar Province in response to the growing power of the Awakening Movement. In cooperation with members of the al-Salmani tribe, Jamal al-Karbouli (Sunni) took on the role of party leader and now oversees party offices located in five provinces: Baghdad, Diyala, Anbar, Salah ah-Din, and Ninewah. Al-Karbouli was a former deputy director of the Red Crescent Society and rumors abound that his current wealth results from fraudulent practices during his tenure there. NMRD started operations in Diyala during 2008 and fielded 29 candidates for the 2009 PC elections. NMRD won 2.6 percent of the vote in Diyala, but has no seats on the PC. (Note: NMRD holds three seats in Anbar province). NMRD highlights the party's secular nature and its 2009 PC candidates were a mixture of Sunni, Shi'a and Kurdish candidates. Various sources report that the organization receives support from Baathists, technocrats and military men. There are also rumors of some party members, connections to al-Qaeda. Ali Hajee, a local journalist, asserts that NMRD's alleged al-Qaeda connections enabled it, unlike other political parties at the time, to operate freely in Baqubah in early 2008.

Previous Incidents of Violence Against NMRD

14. (C) There were two previous attacks against the National Movement for Reform and Development in Diyala. On 20 January an IED detonated in front of the NMRD,s headquarters wounding several individuals. On January 28, one of the party,s PC candidates, Abbas Farhan al-Jubbouri was kidnapped and killed (along with two aides) after a campaign rally in the Mandali area of Diyala. NMRD blamed these incidents on rival political parties that wanted to weaken their growing power.

Who is to Blame?

15. (C) As with the last two incidents, NMRD party members publicly blame rival Sunni political parties. Multiple sources indicate, however, that there is strife internal to the party itself. Kais Chiad Khalaf, a former party member reported that roughly 50 members left the party in Diyala Qreported that roughly 50 members left the party in Diyala after disillusionment with al-Karbouli in the wake of the January 2009 PC elections. He claims this was brought on by a statement al-Karbouli made during the elections about his ability to "buy votes" in Diyala and his subsequent refusal to participate in press outreach events. Additional sources, including Deputy PC Chairman Sadiq Ja, far Abdullah Muhamed (Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq - ISCI) confirmed there are ongoing disagreements among NMRD party members. At present, many PC members and local government contacts have little to say on the incident, although they generally downplayed the party,s influence in the province.

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16. (C) Comment: The press characterizes this recent bombing as an indication of ongoing sectarian strife in Iraq, and a possible precursor to violence in the run up to national elections currently scheduled for January 2010. Nevertheless, while responsibility for the incident remains unclear, it is plausible the attack was not generated from rival political parties. Ongoing disagreements among current and former members suggest that there may have been motives for the bombing from within the organization itself, especially since some may have ties with al-Qaeda. All the same, this recent attack is likely to be interpreted by the public as a sign of ongoing security problems in the province that may worsen during the election season. End comment.

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